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Chairman: Mr. Balarezo ..... (Peru)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 85: Sustainable development (A/59/25, A/59/81-E/2004/63, A/59/115, A/59/158, A/59/262)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/59/167 and A/59/220)

(b) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/59/173)

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(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/59/197)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/59/197)

(g) United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

1. **Mr. Ocampo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that two years after the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the momentum for implementation remained strong. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/59/220), the sharper focus on implementation adopted at the Johannesburg Summit was inspiring Governments and civil society stakeholders to take renewed action to pursue sustainable development.

2. Two emerging trends could be highlighted in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development: the gradual move towards achieving specific sustainable development goals, and the integration of sustainable development principles into national and local development strategies. In various regions of the world efforts were under way to protect watersheds, partnerships were being created to extend piped water connections to rural townships and elementary schools were being provided with latrines. Although their immediate impact was local, the sheer number of such initiatives changed the quality of life of millions of people. Furthermore, approximately 150 Governments were in various stages of implementing national sustainable development strategies, and the integration of sustainable development principles was increasingly widespread.

3. Voluntary partnerships for sustainable development were also playing an important role: as of June 2004, 291 partnerships had been registered with the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Most employed a bottom-up approach, using pilot projects to test their strategies before replicating them at the national, subregional and regional levels. More and more partnerships would be reporting to the Commission on progress made towards implementation of their objectives and the total amount invested in them, already estimated at some US$ 872 million, was therefore likely to rise.

4. Within the United Nations system, coordinated implementation had led to significant progress in the preceding year. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) had taken steps to establish or strengthen inter-agency collaborative arrangements. It had confirmed UN-Water as the inter-agency mechanism for implementation of water-related Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg targets and had set up UN-Energy as a new system-wide mechanism for addressing energy-related issues. The regional commissions had also played an active role, organizing regional meetings and ad hoc sessions to promote implementation of the commitments relating to water, sanitation and human settlements in their regions. Furthermore, on the World Day for Water in March 2004, the Secretary-General had announced the establishment of a high-level advisory board on water and sanitation. Chaired by the former prime minister of Japan, Mr. Hashimoto, and composed of eminent persons from government, civil society and the private sector, the Board would seek to motivate stakeholders to meet the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg targets. The Board should help raise the political visibility of water and sanitation issues and mobilize human and financial resources to advance the water and sanitation agenda.

5. Despite those encouraging signs, overall progress in addressing the obstacles to implementation of

sustainable development objectives remained inadequate. At its twelfth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development had concluded that a considerable number of countries were not on track with regard to the targets of halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015 and improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. In many countries, slums were in fact growing at an alarming pace, sanitation had not received as much attention as water and neither had much prominence in poverty-reduction strategy papers. The Commission had also noted that the persistence of poverty continued to hinder efforts to achieve progress in providing basic services and that the lack of financial resources, technology and capacity remained the major constraints for developing countries.

6. The Commission had agreed that levels of financing were far from adequate and that development partners should, in a spirit of mutual accountability, meet the Monterrey commitments. Many members had also stressed the need for exploring multiple avenues of financial resource mobilization, including partial loan guarantees, special facilities, revolving funds, microcredit schemes and debt swaps. Agreement on practical measures to overcome obstacles in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements would be at the heart of the Commission's programme of work for its thirteenth session in the spring of 2005. Those discussions must be tackled with a sense of urgency in order to expedite implementation of the water, sanitation and human settlement goals and targets agreed to in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

7. The report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of Freshwater, 2003 (A/59/167) took stock of the activities undertaken during the year at all levels and focused on partnerships and alliances established for the year's activities. It also examined the potential for further action beyond 2003 within the framework of the International Decade of Action "Water for Life".

8. His remarks concerning the issues before the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twelfth session were likewise valid for other areas of sustainable development. As the Secretary-General had stated in his report on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, with regard to Millennium Development Goal 7, even regions which had made significant progress towards achieving many other goals had a poorer record on environmental issues. As a result, although protected areas had increased in all regions, there had been a loss of forest cover in some parts of the world, notably those with tropical forests. Moreover, although energy use and per capita carbon dioxide emissions had fallen in the economies in transition with the decline in industrial production in the 1990s, they had increased in the developing countries.

9. Progress in the implementation of the global conventions relating to the environment had been mixed. The recent Russian decision to ratify the Kyoto Protocol was the most positive news in relation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, adopted in 1994, had entered into force in 1996, but a lack of financial resources had limited its implementation. There had however been progress towards implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with the adoption of measurable indicators and specific goals to reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 and the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in September 2003. In the area of deforestation and forest degradation, nine international processes involving 150 countries that encompassed 85 per cent of the world's forests had made progress in developing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. In all those areas, despite progress made, positive trends must be reinforced in order to reverse the negative trends of climate change, biodiversity loss and reduction in forest cover, currently the three major environmental issues faced by the world.

10. The issue of sustainable development in some of the most vulnerable countries — the small island developing States — should also be the subject of special reflection. The international meeting in Mauritius in January 2005 would afford an opportunity for building on the Johannesburg momentum and entering into specific and time-bound commitments to support the sustainable development efforts of the small island developing States. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General in document A/59/173, the Caribbean small island developing States in particular were undertaking a wide range of activities to promote an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area. That approach, which embraced environmental, social and economic as well as legal and institutional elements, should result in a strategy for the effective management and protection of the marine resources of the area.

11. **Mr. Egeland** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator),

speaking on agenda item 87 (c), said that the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was the centrepiece of United Nations efforts to reduce the serious and growing impact that natural hazards had on communities and countries: the number of persons affected by such hazards had doubled, and economic losses had more than tripled, over the past decade.

12. As stated in the report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/59/228), the Strategy had sparked a number of substantive reports, programmes and strategic visions on ways of reducing risk and vulnerability to natural hazards, as a prerequisite for sustainable development. Deserving of special mention was the flagship publication for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, *Living with Risk: A Global Review of Disaster Reduction Initiatives*, which had been issued in a renewed version earlier in the year; a new early warning platform, established in Bonn (Germany) under the auspices of the Strategy's secretariat in order to sustain dialogue on early warning and to develop systematic approaches to the topic; and the regional Strategy outreach programmes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, which had supported national programmes and regional strategies for disaster reduction and innovative public awareness partnerships.

13. The preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, due to take place in Kobe (Japan) in 2005, were advancing well, in terms of both the organizational and logistical aspects and the intergovernmental segment, thematic segment and public forum. The second session of the Preparatory Committee, held the previous October in Geneva, had reviewed organizational aspects as well as the content of the draft framework for the period 2005-2015, tentatively named "Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters, in support of sustainable development". The conference was expected to be a milestone event in disaster risk reduction, in terms of enhancing countries' risk reduction, an essential condition for meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It would, in particular, identify ways to incorporate risk reduction measures into action to reduce poverty.

14. The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Buenos Aires in December 2004, would discuss the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in order to join the international community's climate change and risk reduction efforts. The Vulnerability and Adaptation Resource Group's formulation of a consultative policy paper on climate change and risk reduction, with the support of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and a Task Force, should increase understanding of the interlinkage of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

15. Regarding reduction of the impact of the El Niño phenomenon and related international cooperation, the International Research Centre on the El Niño Phenomenon in Guayaquil (Ecuador), launched by the Government of Ecuador with the support of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Strategy secretariat in 2003, had continued its work on climate risk indexing for agriculture, modelling of risk for El Niño-related transmission of malaria and organizing climate-modelling workshops. A consolidated international board, comprising representatives of the Government of Ecuador, WMO, the Strategy secretariat, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and other stakeholders, was expected to meet in late 2004.

16. In conclusion, he highlighted the key recommendations stemming from the report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/59/228). Firstly, Governments and other stakeholders were encouraged to take full stock of the importance of the 2005 Kobe World Conference on Disaster Reduction, which would enable them to improve risk reduction mechanisms and better integrate risk reduction into their development strategies. Secondly, since the review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States would be completed in Mauritius in 2005, immediately prior to the Kobe Conference, the Conference should consider the recommendations that emerged from that review relating to the reduction of those States' vulnerability to natural hazards, thereby linking the follow-up of both events. Thirdly, if the Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved, then disaster reduction would need to be firmly adopted as a core function of the United Nations. Lastly, the General Assembly had requested, in its resolution 58/214, that adequate financial and administrative resources should be allocated to the inter-agency Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. It would also be desirable for Governments to contribute to the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction and continue to explore mechanisms for resourcing longer-term activities to reduce the impact of natural disasters.

17. **Mr. Moeini** (Islamic Republic of Iran), referring to the remarks of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that, while he recognized the special importance that partners assigned to sustainable development, which had made it possible to muster substantial resources, in the long run a large share of those resources came from the public sector, a situation that was at odds with the partnership philosophy adopted. He asked the Under-Secretary-General whether there were plans to remedy that situation.

18. Regarding implementation, he observed that the problem was one not only of resources, but also of failure at technical fulfilment of the commitments undertaken.

19. He requested further details concerning the approach adopted to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, since he had thought it was meant to be global.

20. **Ms. Zubčević** (Croatia), referring to the remarks of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, asked what was being done to link the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

21. She also asked whether the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs could clarify his statement at a recent meeting to the effect that there were plans to strengthen the support provided by United Nations agencies for implementing the outcome of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. She would also like to know how the early warning mechanisms of which he had just spoken would be linked to overall action for sustainable development.

22. **Mr. Ocampo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), replying to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, said that a large part of the funds invested in the partnerships indeed originated either directly in the public sector, or else indirectly, which was the case when subsidized NGOs participated in a partnership. The situation was disturbing and the private sector should increase its contribution to the financing of partnerships. That contribution could be either philanthropic or purely commercial in that funds paid into a partnership could constitute pre-investments, and the partnership could become a joint commercial venture like any other.

23. Regarding non-fulfilment of commitments, it was true that some commitments were inadequately fulfilled, if at all, a fact that applied to all regions and in all areas relating to the agenda item under consideration.

24. Replying to the representative of Croatia, he said that all the Millennium Development Goals were taken into account in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. That was certainly true not only of Goal 1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), but also of Goal 7 (Ensure environmental sustainability).

25. **Mr. Egeland** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that action to reduce natural hazards and countries' vulnerability to disasters was, first and foremost, a development effort rather than a humanitarian effort. The entire United Nations family, all Member States and non-governmental organizations must make a concerted contribution to that effort. Reducing vulnerability and promoting risk reduction was much more useful than intervening to provide humanitarian assistance after a disaster. In Haiti, which had recently been devastated by a hurricane, more effective and systematic prevention arrangements, such as those put in place in Cuba and other island States, would clearly have reduced the damage. It would be very useful if the humanitarian partners would work with their development counterparts in order to reduce countries' vulnerability.

26. He hoped that the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe (Japan) in January 2005, would be an excellent occasion for bringing all the interlocutors together. Inter-agency cooperation was under way in parallel with the preparation of the World Conference and its follow-up. The Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction had participants from 26 United Nations bodies, regional organizations and civil society organizations and had set up working groups and subgroups in many fields, such as forest-fire prevention and early earthquake warning. The bodies concerned had agreed to study each point, first internally and then by sector, in order to determine how they could each identify follow-up action and open the way for measures to support implementation of the outcome of the World Conference.

27. The inter-agency secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, which reported to the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, and the Task Force had appointed a think tank to determine the most effective means of supporting follow-up, including drafting of reports, sharing information and strengthening the capacity of vulnerable communities.

28. Citing the representative of Croatia, he acknowledged that if an early warning was not preceded by an intervention and early risk reduction measures, the damage could be so grave that humanitarian action could repair it only superficially. That was why the scientific community, the Member States and the humanitarian assistance and development bodies needed to join forces in order to reduce risk. It was very important for donors to increase grants used to finance risk reduction. Some European donors had decided to earmark 15 per cent of their official development assistance to hazard reduction. South-South cooperation was also fundamental, enabling countries exposed to natural disasters to exchange important experience and information on ways of reducing their vulnerability, loss of human life and even the cost of natural disasters.

29. **Ms. Waller-Hunter** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), introducing the report on the implementation of the United Nations environmental conventions (A/59/197), said that outstanding issues relating to the Kyoto Protocol had been resolved, that the institutional framework of both the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol had been strengthened and that a wide range of options for limiting greenhouse emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change were being explored.

30. There was virtually universal recognition that the adverse effects of climate change were real and undermined national and international efforts to achieve sustainable development. The growing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events clearly illustrated those adverse effects. The economic cost of dealing with those effects was steadily increasing and their insurability was posing a problem. To date, 189 States had ratified the Convention, the latest being Turkey. The Kyoto Protocol had been ratified by 126 States, including developing countries which produced 44.2 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions. She welcomed the Russian Government's proposal to the Duma to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and pointed out that the Protocol would enter into force 90 days after the Russian Government had deposited its instrument of ratification in New York.

31. The Clean Development Mechanism was already functioning. Sixty-four States had designated national authorities that would endorse the relevant projects, and promising areas included landfill gas capture and flaring, incineration of hydrofluorocarbon waste streams, fuel switching and renewable energy, such as biopower from rice husks.

32. The Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention had adopted important decisions so as to mobilize resources that would make the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund operational. The Special Climate Change Fund would initially provide resources for adaptation and technology transfer and its associated capacity-building. The Least Developed Countries Fund would continue to support those countries' preparation of national adaptation programmes. There were plans for all 48 official least developed countries to receive full-cost funding for the preparation of their programmes.

33. Regarding options for dealing with climate change, 117 developing countries had submitted their initial national communications, and several had also submitted their second communications or had started working on them. At the same time, the industrialized countries would need to take further action to implement policies and measures that would contribute towards modifying longer-term trends in anthropogenic emissions.

34. Citing the report, she said that the high-level political debate during the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties, which had been attended by 70 ministers, had focused on adaptation and mitigation measures, sustainable development and progress evaluation. It had been recognized that implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures involved synergy and complementarity among economic growth, greater equity, poverty alleviation and environmental protection. The participants had noted that measures such as energy-efficient projects, introduction of renewable energy sources, and development of new technologies could help decouple economic growth from growth in emissions, in addition to achieving social and environmental benefits. Moreover, they had observed that the Protocol was already changing the way one thought about climate, energy and investment.

35. Many countries were in favour of emission trading schemes. Schemes had been formulated, in several countries, including the United Kingdom, and Japan was preparing to introduce a pilot scheme. The private sector had also taken steps in that direction. Large oil companies such as British Petroleum and Shell had established internal trading systems. The Chicago Climate Exchange was operational, which meant that trading carbon was now possible on the

Chicago Stock Exchange; carbon was now a commodity. Local governments, cities and companies were also taking action to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

36. She hoped that Governments would take specific action to deal with the causes and effects of climate change at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties in Buenos Aires in December.

37. **Mr. Diallo** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa), introducing the report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (A/59/197, chap. II), said that the Conference of the Parties at its sixth session, held in 2003, had decided that the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, at its third session, would review updates to reports already available and/or new reports submitted by African States parties. At its third session, which would take place in Bonn (Germany) from 27 April to 6 May 2005, the Committee would consider global and sectoral issues relating to the progress made in implementing the declaration on the commitments under the Convention. He thanked the secretariat of the Convention, which would facilitate the organization of regional consultations to allow regions other than Africa to take part in the discussion. He thanked the Governments of Italy, Norway and Sweden for their contributions to the preparation of the third session of the Committee. The World Bank, the Global Environment Facility and the International Fund for Agricultural Development had also helped developing States parties, especially in Africa, with the preparation of their reports and the organization of regional consultations.

38. The secretariat of the Convention had continued to work in close cooperation with all States parties which had not yet adopted national action programmes and with other interested partners, in order to help them to prepare or finalize their action programmes. Those measures would be described in a report to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session in 2005.

39. Having described the activities of the secretariat of the Convention at the subregional, interregional and regional levels, he commended the Government of Venezuela for its generous contribution, which had helped to finance activities in the context of cooperation between Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. At the regional level, the priority defined for Africa in the New Partnership for Africa's Development, adopted in December 2003, was the fight against land degradation and desertification. At the subregional level, in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, the Economic Community of West African States and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the secretariat of the Convention had been involved in formulating projects on combating desertification.

40. As for the collaboration of the secretariat of the Convention with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), he drew attention to two important initiatives undertaken to enhance implementation of the Convention: the partnership established on a pilot basis by the secretariat of the Fund with implementing and executing agencies and the TerrAfrica initiative of the World Bank.

41. The current year marked the tenth anniversary of the Convention, which now had 191 States parties. Referring to the main recommendations made in the report for consideration by the General Assembly, he emphasized that 75 per cent of those living in extreme poverty lived in rural areas, which made desertification a serious obstacle to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. It could cause tension because the shortage of arable land could lead to conflicts within rural populations, then between States, and could threaten peace and security. In order to achieve the Goals, it was therefore necessary to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in order to create favourable conditions for the prevention of conflicts over access to natural resources and land.

42. **Mr. Zedan** (Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing the report on implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/59/197, chap. III), said that Thailand had ratified the Convention, bringing the number of States parties to 188. To date, 108 countries and the European Community had ratified or acceded to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. He called on those States that had not yet done so to ratify the Protocol as soon as possible so that they could play an active role in the new international regime.

43. In February 2004, the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on

Biological Diversity and the first meeting of the Conference serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, an account of which was contained in the report, had been held in Kuala Lumpur.

44. Since it had been the first time that the Conference of the Parties had met since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, its main concerns had included the need to integrate the biological diversity commitments made in Johannesburg into the work of the Convention and translate them into concrete action.

45. Participants in the Conference of the Parties had expressed the opinion that the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in relation to combating poverty, hunger, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation would be dependent on the realization of a commitment to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss. That was why the participants in the Conference had urged parties, Governments and international organizations to implement activities undertaken for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in ways that were consistent with the objectives of the Convention.

46. The Conference of the Parties had developed a framework to assess progress towards the targets set for 2010. It had mandated the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to negotiate an international regime on access to genetic resources and the sharing of benefits resulting from their use. It had adopted a programme of work on protected areas that provided for the establishment of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas. It had also adopted new programmes of work on mountain biodiversity and technology transfer and cooperation, and it had decided to develop a programme of work on island biodiversity to be considered at its eighth meeting.

47. The Conference had also emphasized the need for rapid action to deal with threats to biological diversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, on the basis of the precautionary approach and the ecosystem approach. It had requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention to support work on the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for the creation of new marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction.

48. Referring to the strengthening of cooperation between the secretariats of environmental conventions, he listed a number of workshops which had been held at the national and international levels to strengthen synergies between the Conventions.

49. Lastly, describing the outcome of the work of the first Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol, he said that the participants had established procedures and mechanisms designed to facilitate decision-making by parties of import. The Meeting had adopted procedures and mechanisms for promoting compliance under the Protocol, including the establishment of a Compliance Committee, and had initiated the development of international rules and procedures regarding liability and redress for damage resulting from the transboundary movements of living modified organisms, which were expected to be completed within four years.

50. **Ms. Bah Diallo** (Assistant Director-General for Education a.i., United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that sustainable development was an imperative for human development, and that the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) was attracting a high level of enthusiasm among partners at all levels. That was a sign that the peoples of the world wished to learn to live sustainably.

51. When the Decade had been announced, Governments had been invited to reorient their education systems in support of sustainable development. Sustainable development involved society, the economy and the environment, but also related to basic human needs and to human rights. Adding the essential cultural dimension led to approaches to sustainable development that were intersectoral and interdisciplinary, an integrated vision which required educational processes that were suitably constructed and conducted. Promoting sustainable development called for the provision of quality education which involved the transmission of certain values (respect for human life, for others, for difference and diversity, for the environment and for the resources of the planet) and a sense of justice, responsibility, rights, human dignity and especially equality. The vision of the Decade was to create a world where everyone could benefit from education and learn the values, behaviours, capabilities and lifestyles required for a sustainable present and future and for positive societal transformation.

52. The proposed global implementation plan offered a range of options for all who wished to participate in the Decade as their circumstances permitted. Brainstormed by hundreds of participants, it had been

reviewed by researchers and specialists before being submitted to an expert group set up to advise the Director-General of UNESCO on the implementation of the Decade. It briefly described the challenges and outlined the type of education that development partners considered most likely to facilitate sustainable development. Seven strategies were available to the wide range of stakeholders in the Decade: advocacy and vision-building; consultation and ownership; partnership and networks; capacity-building and training; research and innovation; use of information and communication technologies; and monitoring and evaluation. All local and global stakeholders would find in it programme models, projects and initiatives which, taken together, could be used to move forward, while the last section set out an implementation timeline for the Decade.

53. It was through education that people developed their full potential, whether as individuals or as part of the family, neighbourhood, country or the world. But they needed to know how to adapt and rise to the challenges of the current world and to assume their responsibility towards future generations. Above all, it was the content and processes of education that would help the world's peoples to learn to live together sustainably.

54. The milestones to that future were: (a) the tangible and measurable Millennium Development Goals, within which education was an input and an indicator; (b) the Education for All initiative, which aimed at providing universal access to quality education; (c) the United Nations Literacy Decade, which laid the groundwork for all forms of structured learning; and (d) the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which promoted a set of values, capabilities and behavioural outcomes valid for all situations.

55. **Mr. Toepfer** (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) said that as issues of international peace and security, particularly the war on terror, the role of multilateralism and the risks of environmental degradation took centre stage globally, UNEP was assessing the peace and environment situation of post-conflict countries. It was collecting the scientific data required to review and institute early-warning systems for improving global governance of the environment. The UNEP work programme was not fragmented, given the correlation among all its programme activities.

56. Providing ecological services would also help advance pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. The issue was not so much water preservation for environmental protection as the creation of an enabling environment for water conservation. Upstream forests must be preserved in order to protect humid areas and thereby safeguard downstream water resources. Only through such an ecosystemic approach could the integrated management of water resources be envisaged. The matter was under study by a working group that UNEP had set up with the cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and UN-Habitat.

57. He drew attention to the entry into force of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, whose secretariat would be established in Geneva and at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome. Chemicals deserved special attention because of their effects on the environment and agriculture and the need to meet demand from a rapidly growing population by practising diversity-friendly bio-farming. What was more, the text of the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants had been finalized. UNEP was making speedy progress towards the creation of an integrated chemicals management system and expected to help build by 2020 a world where human health and the environment would be free from chemical hazards. That objective had been set in the Johannesburg Implementation Plan, notwithstanding the strategic importance of the chemical industry to poverty reduction.

58. UNEP had conducted an environmental assessment of small island developing States and would be bringing useful information to the forthcoming international meeting in Mauritius.

59. The Intergovernmental Working Group set up to develop a strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building would hold its third and last preparatory meeting in Bali, Indonesia, with the objective of contributing, together with UNDP, to environmental protection capacity-building.

60. Since the application of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, the number of donors had increased significantly, and it was to be hoped that the trend would continue.

61. UNEP planned to go beyond Millennium Development Goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability to tackle the issues of poverty and hunger, gender equity and the forging of a global partnership for development.

62. **Mr. Ashe** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that biological diversity in maritime zones beyond national jurisdiction was of undeniable importance to some countries. At the last Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, no new programme areas had been added. Perhaps the Executive Secretary of the Convention secretariat could state whether the issue would be included in existing programmes, failing which it would lose its importance.

63. Given the importance to the parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification of securing more funds, and given the need to replenish the GEF, he wondered whether the Executive Secretary planned, in the course of his third term in office, to find other modalities of financing the implementation of the Convention, regional sources included.

64. Noting that the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change also marked the tenth anniversary of the coming into force of the Convention, and taking into account the statement of President Putin on the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, he asked whether the time had not come to encourage all the Parties to commit themselves more resolutely to the implementation of the Convention.

65. **Mr. Moeini Meybodi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that more detailed indications of the work done by the Joint Liaison Group would be helpful in future reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of environment-related conventions. With regard to the Kyoto Protocol, he welcomed the developments in the implementation of the flexible arrangements built into that instrument but deplored the lack of commitment by developed countries.

66. He asked the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification whether the draft memorandum of agreement between the Convention secretariat and the GEF would be ready for the next Conference of Parties to the Convention. Referring to the issue of GEF replenishment earlier mentioned by the Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, he wondered what could be done at the current stage to secure financing for sustainable land management projects.

67. As to the establishment of a working group on biological diversity in those maritime zones beyond national jurisdiction, he would like to know from the Executive Secretary whether the legal aspects would be included in the working group's terms of reference, given that such issues were also addressed in another forum.

68. Referring to the proposed draft implementation plan mentioned by the Assistant Director-General for Education a.i. of UNESCO, he would like to know if it took into account the need to mobilize more resources and strengthen inter-agency cooperation to reach the goal of basic education for all.

69. Lastly, more information was needed on the extent to which additional contributions collected by UNEP thanks to the voluntary indicative scale of contributions could help to finance the implementation of the intergovernmental strategic plan.

70. **Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa) said that he would like to have further details of the technical cooperation established by UNEP to help countries to obtain an integrated water resource management plan. Citing the need to mobilize additional resources to implement the intergovernmental strategic plan, he asked whether it was possible to make progress on that front.

71. **Mr. Anaedu** (Nigeria) said that the early warning and monitoring mechanisms were important, but he wondered about the degree of readiness to go to the next phase, namely early intervention. With respect to interventions, the results were unsatisfactory wherever there was a need to address a difficult situation on the ground. Nigeria welcomed the imminent entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, which was crucial to the question of climate change. Nevertheless, it should be noted that developing countries did not have the necessary technology, capacity and resources to ensure the implementation of the provisions relating to the clean development mechanism and other initiatives associated with climate change management. It was unclear what was being done to help them in that respect. Concerning desertification, it was surprising that the Convention to Combat Desertification had not been mentioned in the preliminary version of the report on the Millennium Project even though it had been widely accepted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development that the Convention would be an important instrument for poverty elimination.

72. **Ms. Campos** (Venezuela) was gratified by the mention of the support that her country had given to the implementation process of the Convention to Combat Desertification. For Venezuela, desertification was a problem faced not only at the international level but also at the local level, especially in rural areas. The action it was taking to combat desertification was part of a strategy that also sought to eliminate poverty and

famine caused by the deterioration of the environment. Her Government paid particular attention to the programmes of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and had been cooperating with it since becoming a party to the Convention. Her Government reaffirmed its strong determination to continue to support the implementation of that instrument.

73. **Mr. Zedan** (Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity), replying to a question on the prospects for cooperation between the working group to be established on biological diversity in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said that the Conference of Parties had recognized the need to improve conservation and sustainable use of the flora and fauna in such areas. The Conference had therefore called on the General Assembly and other international organizations to take the necessary measures to eliminate or avoid destructive practices in accordance with international law, urged the relevant organizations to develop mechanisms to establish marine protected areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and requested the secretariat to cooperate in the work under way on conservation and sustainable use of deep seabed resources. Replying next to the question put by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda concerning the possible adoption of separate work programmes under the Convention, he said that the work could be carried out within the framework of existing programmes, including those relating to marine and coastal biological diversity or to protected areas. In some instances, the main impetus would most likely be given by other organizations and not necessarily by the Convention secretariat. However, since the work programmes established within the framework of the Convention were relevant, there was a need to take into account the links existing between them and other initiatives. With respect to legal matters affecting biological diversity in areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, the secretariat was cooperating closely with the International Seabed Authority, UNEP and the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and, when the working groups were created, he would notify the Conference of the Parties and lend them his support.

74. **Mr. Diallo** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) said that it was not possible to attain the Millennium Development Goals without making an effort to change things, particularly with respect to investment in rural areas, where 75 per cent of the world's poor lived. Consequently, the main goal, not only for the secretariat of the Convention but also other entities concerned such as FAO, must be to think about what could be done to focus attention on rural areas. The international community was not being called upon to make inordinate efforts. The problems had already been identified and solutions had been found. It was known that there was a need to tackle the problem of soil degradation. It mattered little whether the approaches were unilateral or multilateral so long as there was a determination to act. As the Executive Director of UNEP had pointed out, time was of the essence. But the international community had the necessary tools, and the means of implementation to halt desertification were within reach. Even if the funds were lacking, the international community must mobilize itself further. In any case, it would be enough, at the outset, if countries honoured the commitments made under the Monterrey Consensus.

75. Before resorting to new legislation to prevent flows of migrants, it must be noted that the problem of migration would not arise if persons living in drylands had the opportunity to enhance their productive capacity. The representative of Nigeria was right to emphasize that the Convention to Combat Desertification was an important instrument for eliminating poverty. That factor would undoubtedly be taken into consideration in the context of the Millennium Project, because it was impossible to improve economic and social conditions without giving the necessary attention to the problems of soil degradation and desertification.

76. He expressed his gratitude to the representative of Venezuela for her country's support. He also paid tribute to the many countries that had recently adopted a programme of action to combat desertification. That issue affected developing countries but not only them; all countries had a role to play to help to establish the conditions that would allow for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals within the agreed time frame.

77. Concerning the question put by the Iranian delegation, the Executive Director of UNEP indicated that the Programme was cooperating with the secretariat of the GEF in the finalization of a memorandum of understanding between the secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Council of the Facility. All Parties to the Convention must lend their support so that agreement might be reached on the best way of using the resources available to the Facility to resolve the problems relating to desertification.

78. **Mr. Toepfer** (Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme) said that the additional funds collected thanks to the voluntary indicative scale of contributions would not be enough. More must be done. UNEP, for its part, sought to integrate the issue of capacity-building into all the discussions on strategic agreements conducted with the donor community. It should be recalled that that issue was also connected with the coordination of capacity-building activities throughout the United Nations system and that it was therefore necessary to define a common approach. The work done in the area of early warning and assessment had been mentioned, but it constituted only one aspect of the work under way. UNEP had a very broad capacity-building programme. That issue would certainly be at the core of discussions during the meeting to be held by the intergovernmental working group in Bali.

79. With respect to integrated water resource management, it was essential to attain the target set for 2005. Failure to reach that short-term target would have a disastrous effect, given its paramount importance within the framework of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and also because it would augur badly for the longer-term targets. As had been mentioned, an inter-agency working group had been established. He therefore sincerely hoped that progress could be made in that area during the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It was also true there were additional needs in terms of human and financial capacity. That issue would be at the forefront of the work programme.

80. He recognized that action must not be limited to the development of early warning mechanisms. UNEP had played a very active role in post-conflict situations, but more emphasis should be placed on early warning and action in order to defuse tension. In collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), two assessments (one dealing, in particular, with the Central Asian republics) had been conducted, in which the links between ecological problems, the situation of various ethnic groups and migration had been highlighted. In his view, those assessments were important instruments that identified the sectors in which rapid action was needed. In that connection, by way of example, he referred to the anticipated problems in the Lake Chad region. In that specific case, assessments alone would not suffice: there was a need to promote the adoption of a number of measures in collaboration with other partners in order to prevent future conflicts. Those considerations had several things in common with the observations made on the subject of the precautionary principle by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. In that connection, UNEP had begun to draft a new memorandum of understanding with the Under-Secretary-General so that information gathered about the environment could be used directly for precautionary and preventive measures.

81. **Ms. Bah Diallo** (Assistant Director-General for Education a.i., United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) recalled that the international community had made a commitment to free up the resources necessary to finance the development of basic education in countries that were willing to take action in that field. A number of countries had already adopted national action plans, but the funds required for their implementation were still not available. Every year, the Director-General of UNESCO convened a high-level group to assess the situation. Unfortunately, the representatives of the developing countries were frequently absent from those meetings. At the next meeting, which would take place in Brazil in November, a new appeal would be launched for the mobilization of the resources necessary for achieving the objective of education for all. Cooperation between organizations was totally indispensable. UNESCO had already established relations with several bodies and intended to pursue that form of cooperation. It was also important to include universities, since they carried out important work in the area of capacity-building and research. Non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector also had a significant role to play. Lastly, UNESCO would campaign for respect for the commitments undertaken within the framework of the Monterrey Consensus.

82. **Ms. Waller-Hunter** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) took the view that the positive new developments in the Russian Federation should have a favourable effect on the results of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Buenos Aires in December. During the high-level segment, panel discussions would be held in order to assess progress made and identify future activities 10 years after the entry into force of the Convention. Those discussions would, for the first time, give Parties the opportunity to put forward their ideas on how they planned to continue working on their commitments after 2012. The representative of Nigeria had rightly emphasized the importance of capacity-building in connection with the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which was an

important component of the package of measures adopted by the Parties with a view to strengthening capacity within the framework of the Convention and would be reviewed at the session of the Conference of the Parties. On numerous occasions, the Parties and the Executive Board of CDM had stressed the importance of broad geographical representation within the Mechanism. Consequently, she welcomed the fact that 64 Parties had already appointed their national authorities, which would be empowered to approve projects before their submission. In addition, the Executive Board of CDM and the secretariat of the Convention supported the various activities undertaken with a view to strengthening capacities relating to the Mechanism.

83. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) emphasized the importance of the Barbados Programme of Action for both the sustainable development of small island developing States, one of the most vulnerable groups of countries, and the environmental health of the planet. The social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities of the small island developing States had been made glaringly obvious by the horrendous destruction wrought by the cyclones and hurricanes in the Pacific and Caribbean regions in 2004. The International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, to be held in Mauritius in January 2005, and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, must give high priority to helping those countries to build greater resilience and enhance their preparedness to enable them to deal with ever more frequent natural disasters.

84. Over the past year, the small island developing States had participated actively in the preparations for the International Meeting. Following the regional meetings held in late 2003, an Interregional Preparatory Meeting had been held in the Bahamas in early 2004, following which the Nassau Declaration and a Strategy for the Alliance of Small Island States had been adopted. That document had formed the working basis for the preparatory meeting in April and the informal consultations in May. Given that a number of critical issues remained outstanding, it would be appropriate to recommend that the General Assembly should acknowledge that the informal consultations scheduled for 8 and 9 January 2005 in Mauritius were required. The international community must now carry forward to the International Meeting in Mauritius the spirit of goodwill that had characterized the preparatory process, and the Meeting must not only generate a renewal of the global commitment to the development of the small island States, but must also produce tangible results in the daily lives of their people.

85. On the United Nations side, invitations to the International Meeting had been sent to all Member States and observers as well as to non-member States, civil society organizations and NGOs. He took the opportunity to urge Member States once again to send delegations at the highest level possible. The participation of the major groups identified in Agenda 21, United Nations bodies within and outside the system, the Bretton Woods institutions and private sector organizations would be essential. In addition, regional intergovernmental organizations, with the support of the relevant United Nations bodies, must play a more active role in the promotion and follow-up of the implementation of the outcome documents of the Mauritius Meeting. The high-level segment should devote particular attention to, inter alia, practical ways of carrying forward the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

86. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was also of particular relevance to the most vulnerable countries — the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States — which were regularly ravaged by natural disasters and faced obstacles on account of the weakness of their infrastructure or geographical impediments. Ten years after the historic Yokohama Conference, the human and economic losses due to natural disasters had increased in recent years and, in general, the world had become more vulnerable to them, with the poor and socially disadvantaged groups from developing countries the most severely affected. The objectives on which the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World were based consisted in saving human lives and protecting property, and those documents favoured the development of a global culture of prevention and the adoption of a policy of self-reliance in each vulnerable country and community that included capacity-building and the allocation and efficient use of resources. The Yokohama Strategy had agreed to give priority attention to developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable among them, and to assist Governments to implement the priority areas of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s and the Barbados Programme of Action at the national and regional levels. The main thrust of the Yokohama Strategy for the most vulnerable countries should be

reiterated, taking into account the Brussels and Almaty Programmes of Action and the outcome of the Mauritius Meeting. In addition, specific directions and clearer priorities for action at all levels must be developed in order to ensure the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and to support the achievement of the objectives of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Declaration.

87. The implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was linked to the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was also inextricably linked to efforts to eradicate poverty and bring about sustainable human development. In view of the vulnerability of countries to the effects of desertification, climate change and diminishing biological diversity, the implementation of the Convention was a matter of urgency. It was also vital to consolidate activities and mechanisms related to the implementation of the three conventions and reporting procedures and to strengthen international cooperation and partnerships in order to ensure that their provisions were implemented comprehensively and efficiently.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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Chairman: Mr. Balarezo ..... (Peru)
later: Ms. Anzorge (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Poland)
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04-56041 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 85: Sustainable development (A/59/25, Suppl. No. 25, A/59/262, A/59/81-E/2004/63, A/59/115 and A/59/158)

(a) **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (A/59/270 and A/59/167)

(b) **Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (A/59/173 and A/59/409)

(c) **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction** (A/59/228)

(d) **Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind** (A/59/197)

(e) **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa** (A/59/197)

(f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (A/59/197)

(g) **United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development**

1. **Mr. Al-Hinzab** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the developing countries which had made enormous efforts to meet the targets and goals in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, needed concrete support from their development partners and in particular more support for African countries.

2. The thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development should decide on policy options and actions to further the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The Commission should avoid introducing recommendations or policy frameworks that might affect the integrity of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The regional preparatory meetings for the twelfth session had made positive contributions to the work of the Commission. The regional processes should be strengthened, and support provided to enable developing countries to participate in regional meetings.

3. The Group of 77 and China advocated increased representation of major groups from developing countries in future meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development. They urged the Secretariat and development partners to provide the necessary support in that regard. Greater involvement in partnerships by other actors, including the private sector, was necessary to ensure that resources for development were not diverted. Partnerships should be broadened to cover sectors such as desertification. They should remain a complement and not a substitute for commitments by Governments. The Group of 77 and China urged their development partners to increase their efforts in support of developing countries, especially by providing new and additional financial resources, facilitating technology transfer on concessional, non-commercial and preferential terms, and improving capacity-building.

4. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation called for the expeditious implementation of decisions on international environmental governance. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the ongoing work on the elaboration, under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), of an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building. The Plan would require additional resources and new funding mechanisms. The Group of 77 and China would work for an agreement on those additional resources at the next meeting of the High-level Open-ended Working Group to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2004. They urged their development partners to support that approach.

5. The recent hurricanes that had devastated some Caribbean island States illustrated the vulnerable situation of small island developing States (SIDS). The Group of 77 and China looked forward to the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States to be held in Mauritius. Its outcome should be a high-level commitment by the international community to fulfil its undertakings to help those States achieve sustainable development. The natural disasters that had afflicted different parts of the world also pointed to the

need for a comprehensive response by the international community. The Group of 77 and China hoped that the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan, would result in agreements that would help developing countries address the devastation caused by natural disasters.

6. The Group of 77 and China reiterated the call of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to the effect that annex I countries should take urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They welcomed the decisions of the ninth Conference of the Parties on the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Country Fund and looked forward to the operationalization of those funds. The full implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) continued to be an important objective of the Group of 77 and China. They hoped that the memorandum of understanding between the Convention and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) would be finalized soon.

7. The Group of 77 and China would also contribute to the discussions in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity for the elaboration of a long overdue international regime to regulate access and benefit sharing. The international community should also take urgent steps to meet the goal set in Johannesburg for the achievement, by 2010, of a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity. It was gratifying that the Conference of the Parties had adopted a framework for monitoring the implementation of that goal. The implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety would require capacity-building and technical support to be provided to developing countries. The Group of 77 and China looked forward to the implementation of the outcomes of the first Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol held in Malaysia earlier in 2004.

8. **Mr. Boon von Ochssee** (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, including the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro), said that the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had been highly successful. The Commission had clearly identified the main constraints and obstacles to be overcome in the field of water, sanitation and human settlements and had addressed the progress made on cross-cutting issues. The readiness of countries to overcome those obstacles and constraints would determine the success of the thirteenth session. The European Union strongly believed in delivering commitments through the multilateral system. An active involvement of United Nations agencies in the policy year was also important. At its thirteenth session, the Commission would also have to clarify the important role of type II partnerships and formulate decisions and recommendations to provide a substantive input to preparations for the major event in September 2005.

9. The European Union was deeply concerned about the regional and global consequences of human-induced climate change. The fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was likely to demonstrate that uncertainties about the climate system had been further reduced. Over the decade since the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, considerable work had been done to develop the pillars of climate change action within the United Nations framework, with the Kyoto Protocol and the Marrakesh accords as the main results. The European Union welcomed the recent development in Russia with regard to ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. The entry into force and timely implementation of the Kyoto Protocol was a key priority of the European Union, which was determined to demonstrate progress in its own climate change policies by 2005.

10. The European Union believed that mitigation remained the cornerstone of current and future climate change policies. It had taken action to meet its Kyoto target for the first commitment period and to implement its commitments under the Convention. The European Union expected all developed countries to take the necessary steps to fulfil their Kyoto commitments. As far as developing countries were concerned, the level of their emissions would very much depend on the development path they chose. There was great scope to take advantage of synergies between development and climate policies. In addition to mitigation, adaptation would continue to be important, since it would be impossible to prevent the impact of climate change. The European Union was actively supporting developing countries in their efforts to counter adverse effects of climate change and urged other developed countries to do likewise.

11. Responsibility for further action from 2012 onwards should be governed by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and reflect countries' differing capabilities. Emission reductions for developed countries of greater magnitude than those included in the Kyoto Protocol were necessary. A process would be needed through which a formal dialogue could be conducted. The European Union looked forward to an early dialogue to prepare future negotiations on a multilateral framework based on the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Those preparations should be completed before the start of the first commitment period in 2008.

12. The European Union reaffirmed its commitment to substantially increase the global share of renewable energy in the total energy supply and welcomed the outcomes of the International Conference for Renewable Energies held in Bonn, in June 2004. The International Action Programme adopted at the Conference confirmed that will. The European Union was moving ahead with its Energy Initiative for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development, thereby helping to provide access to energy, especially for the poor. The World Conference on Energy for Development would be held in the Netherlands in December 2004. The overall objective of the Conference was to achieve sustainable energy policies in developing countries based on the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

13. The review of the Convention to Combat Desertification to be conducted in early 2005 would focus on Africa. The intended analysis of the underlying causes of desertification, as well as approaches, policies and activities was very important; however, desertification and poverty could not be combated only by means of technical analysis and policy development. There was a strong need for reform in the functioning of the Convention and its subsidiary bodies in order to ensure its continued relevance as a means for tackling the problems of desertification.

14. The European Union was very concerned about the alarming rate of overall loss of biodiversity at the global level and welcomed the outcomes of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which had focused on the achievement of the 2010 target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss and urged all countries to move from policy development to implementation. The European Union welcomed the programme of work on protected areas, as well as the agreement on a set of biodiversity indicators to be tested, identified or developed in order to monitor progress towards the 2010 target.

15. Work on strengthening international environmental governance should build on existing structures, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Welcome progress had been made towards the full implementation of the package of reforms agreed at Cartagena in 2002 and reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Such strengthening could also lead to the upgrading of UNEP into a specialized agency of the United Nations system. Thus, the European Union welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the issue of establishing universal membership of the Governing Council of UNEP (A/59/262). Universal membership should be combined with the establishment of an efficient management mechanism, such as an executive board. The European Union acknowledged the progress made on the Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building. While the framework underpinning the Strategic Plan should be system-wide, the Strategic Plan itself should focus more on the role of UNEP as the leading environmental authority.

16. The European Union looked forward to the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Mauritius in January 2005. The meeting would be more than a 10-year review of a programme of action; there was also a need to look at the new challenges facing small island developing States, including those imposed by globalization, HIV/AIDS, migration and terrorism. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Japan in January 2005, which would provide a valuable opportunity to reinvigorate the discussion on all aspects of natural disaster reduction, should take into account the outcome of the tenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

17. The World Urban Forum, held recently in Barcelona, had been an important event, given the important role of cities as "engines of growth". Cities would increasingly become mass consumers of natural resources, creating an enormous pressure on both

surrounding and global ecosystems. The policies to meet those challenges would demand strong political will, without which urban centres would face impoverishment and pollution instead of growth. In view of that urgency, the European Union planned to publish, in early 2005, a document entitled "Towards Sustainable Urban Development".

18. The European Union noted that the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT would be meeting at the same time as the Commission on Sustainable Development. It was important to find a way to introduce decisions taken at the Governing Council into the Commission session. The European Union was committed to the sustainable development agenda and would continue to strive for an implementation-oriented outcome of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

19. **Mr. Sopoaga** (Tuvalu), speaking on behalf of the members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that the members of AOSIS would like to stress the urgency of achieving all the objectives of the three Rio Conventions on the state of the environment, which were fundamental to the survival of the populations of the world, particularly those living in small, low-lying and vulnerable islands. The Committee should give careful consideration to the reports on the three conventions. He thanked the Secretary-General for the report on promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development (A/59/173). In that regard, he called on the international community to participate more actively in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/261.

20. It appeared that a likely outcome of the Mauritius Meeting on the Barbados Programme of Action would be a strategy for the further implementation of the Programme. While much progress had been made, there were still thorny issues remaining to be resolved, including climate change, LDC graduation, trade and the provision of financial resources. He encouraged the delegations concerned to continue informal discussions and expressed the readiness of AOSIS members to discuss outstanding issues through informal consultations with their partners. The members of AOSIS felt it would be necessary to convene two days of informal consultations prior to the start of the International Meeting. They were pleased with the improvement in the flow of information regarding sustainable development, as well as with the preparatory process for the International Meeting, which had also been facilitated by the SIDS Unit staff at SIDSnet. However, AOSIS was concerned that much of the staff in the Unit were not on full contracts, but were funded through voluntary contributions from donors. The SIDS Unit should be strengthened, as it remained the primary focal point and the most appropriate mechanism of the United Nations system to follow up and monitor the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action after the Mauritius meeting. The role of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States would also be crucial in that regard.

21. The members of AOSIS would like to thank the international community for contributing generously to the Voluntary Trust Fund so as to ensure the full and effective participation of small island developing States in the Mauritius International Meeting. They hoped that the pledges made would be fulfilled as soon as possible. They also requested the Secretariat to take the necessary measures to facilitate the participation of delegates from those States to be funded by the Trust Fund in a timely manner. He called on Member States to fully support the preparatory process leading to the International Meeting and to make special efforts to be represented at the meeting at the highest level.

22. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China), noting the success of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, said that the thirteenth session should focus on specific issues and policy measures to effectively promote the realization of the relevant objectives.

23. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities for the developed and developing countries laid down in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol should be followed. China, which had ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2002, hoped that the steps taken by the Russian Government to initiate the ratification process would contribute to the speedy entry into force and effective implementation of the Protocol. The Government of China had made and would continue to make enormous efforts to respond effectively to climate change and improve the environment even as it pursued its economic development. China was prepared to work with the rest of the international community in supporting the Kyoto Protocol and

would explore additional ways to respond to climate change that would take into account national conditions while at the same time mobilizing the enthusiasm of all countries.

24. The Convention to Combat Desertification had not been fully implemented, largely owing to the lack of financial resources. The developed countries should fulfil their pledges at an early date so as to increase financial input and make it possible to implement the Convention. His delegation appreciated the work of the Convention secretariat and hoped that it would further strengthen its communication and cooperation with the Global Environment Facility, expand financial resources for the Convention and enhance prevention and control efforts.

25. The Chinese Government attached great importance to the protection of biological diversity. As one of the first parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, China had taken an active part in international efforts in that regard and would continue to do so. Disaster reduction was also an important issue, and his delegation hoped that the international community, especially the developed countries, would increase material and technological post-disaster assistance to the developing countries and help them improve their capacity for disaster prevention, preparation and reduction. He hoped that the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe in 2005, would promote implementation of specific objectives and programmes.

26. While some progress had been made with regard to implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, much remained to be done. His delegation hoped that the International Meeting to be held in Mauritius in 2005 would be action oriented. Obstacles to the implementation of the Programme of Action should be identified and specific solutions sought so as to promote the sustainable development of those States.

27. **Mr. Chulkov** (Russian Federation) said that the principles of sustainable development must be put into practice to preserve the human habitat and achieve general development goals. Advances had been made towards implementing Agenda 21 and the decisions of the Johannesburg Summit. The Economic and Social Council had assumed greater responsibility for the coordination and integration of the various efforts to promote sustainable development in United Nations policies and programmes. United Nations agencies had enhanced the coordination of assistance to countries to carry out the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals, and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination had been increasingly involved in that process.

28. His delegation welcomed the outcome of the eighth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, particularly the Jeju initiative on water, sanitation and human settlements, and also the decisions on international environmental governance, including an intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building.

29. The International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006 could also advance Agenda 21. The Mauritius International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action should stimulate and strengthen the constructive basis for the sustainable development of small island developing States.

30. His Government was a party to conventions to address such environmental threats as climate change, desertification and biodiversity loss and actively participated in international efforts to preserve the global climate. Broad cooperation was needed to reduce man-made negative effects on the climate. Notwithstanding the recent attention given to the Kyoto Protocol, the importance of implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should not be overlooked. He announced with satisfaction his Government's decision to send the Protocol to Parliament for ratification, after careful consideration of its significance for international cooperation on climate issues.

31. United Nations funds and programmes must include desertification in their strategies to promote the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. The regional dimension of the Convention and regional programme of cooperation for the countries of eastern and central Europe should be taken into consideration at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

32. His delegation welcomed the decisions adopted at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity concerning thematic and intersectoral work programmes. There was a need for stronger interaction between the Conference and other institutions and instruments and better coordination in areas such as forest management and access and benefit sharing.

33. His Government attached great significance to the international efforts to implement the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, favoured strengthening the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and was participating actively in preparations for the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction to be held in Japan. It would provide round-trip transportation to all interested delegations from the Commonwealth of Independent States and the countries of eastern and central Europe as a contribution in kind. Lastly, his delegation supported the work being done by UNEP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the areas of disaster reduction and emergency relief in particular.

34. **Mr. Lahiri** (India) said that developing countries must address environmental degradation and poverty and their impact on economic growth. Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation reflected the international consensus that poverty eradication was necessary for sustainable development. Without new and additional financial resources, concessional and non-commercial terms, the developing countries would not be able to achieve sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals. His delegation welcomed the adoption of new work methods by the Commission on Sustainable Development and urged the international community to provide the necessary means of implementation to developing countries at the thirteenth session of the Commission. The steps taken to strengthen inter-agency cooperation were commendable. Inter-agency work on sustainable development must closely follow the priorities that emerged from intergovernmental processes. The International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action in January 2005 should result in increased support for the Programme.

35. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities of States must be applied while addressing such concerns as climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion and biodiversity loss. For developing countries, an international regime to promote access and benefit sharing was particularly significant. His delegation therefore welcomed the decisions made at the Johannesburg Summit and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to negotiate such a regime.

36. The focus on land degradation, desertification and deforestation as areas to be financed by the Global Environment Facility was significant. Additional financial resources would be required, however, to meet the commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. His Government called on States that had not done so to accede to the Kyoto Protocol and welcomed the outcome of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Lastly, international environmental governance issues must be examined in the context of sustainable development. His Government therefore welcomed the ongoing efforts to develop an intergovernmental strategy to implement the decisions of the Cartagena Meeting on the Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technology, Cooperation and Capacity-building.

37. **Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had revealed some of the impediments facing many African countries in implementing the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the determination of all States to eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. There was a need for enhanced scientific and technical capacities and more investment in water, sanitation and human settlements. The provision of the means of implementation, as agreed at the international summits in Monterrey and Johannesburg, was critical to African efforts to meet their development goals. The Commission also stressed the need for the international community to increase its support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

38. While some progress was being made towards developing integrated water resource management by 2005, developing countries, especially African States, would not be able to meet that goal without increased international support. Management and water efficiency plans would be needed to achieve the goal of halving by 2015 the proportion of people who did not have access to safe drinking water.

39. The implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification was an important priority for the African Group, as desertification affected many African countries. Desertification contributed to increasing poverty by reducing available productive land and agricultural output. His Government therefore urged the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and Council of the Global Environment Facility to finalize their memorandum of understanding and development partners to increase their financial support for the Convention. Africa possessed a wealth of biodiversity and had five significant biodiversity hot spots. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity would contribute to poverty eradication. Negotiations on the international regime for access and benefit sharing must therefore be completed as early as possible by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and be legally binding. The African Group welcomed the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly those relating to the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund.

40. Africa was the only continent where reported disasters had increased over the previous decade. It faced pervasive hydro-meteorological hazards and pest infestation. Several West African countries were experiencing a locust plague that was expected to lead to food shortages. The recommendations adopted at the African regional consultation on disaster risk reduction in Johannesburg in June 2004 should be taken into account at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Japan in 2005. Lastly, the African Group was committed to strengthening international environmental governance. The High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building must reach agreement at its meeting in Bali in December 2005 so that such a plan, an important component of international environmental governance, could be adopted at the forthcoming meeting of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum.

41. **Mr. Ali** (Bangladesh) said that reconciling development and environmental objectives was a daunting challenge for resource-constrained countries. Without growth, however, sustainable development would remain elusive. Sustainable development could not be achieved while widespread poverty persisted. If rural poverty were not reduced, urban poverty would continue to grow, thereby hindering progress on sanitation, access to safe drinking water and human settlements.

42. Managed trade liberalization could create opportunities for enhanced exports from developing countries but environmental standards applied arbitrarily might hinder trade. Trade instruments must not, therefore, be the first remedy for environmental problems. The multilateral trading system had a deep impact on developing economies and Agenda 21. The protection of new plant varieties under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights could lead to overplanting of single varieties and biodiversity loss, in violation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

43. Science and technology could be powerful tools to combat poverty. His Government had called for the transfer of environmentally sound technology to developing countries at affordable prices. There had been little or no progress, however, in that direction. The international community must also work to make the Least Developed Countries Fund effective.

44. The relationship between the international financial system and sustainable development was strong, and the financial crises of the late 1990s had highlighted the need to pursue a strategy to ensure stability and growth. Any system that favoured creditors over debtors or allowed currency speculators to dominate would cause suffering. Unless the inequities of the financial system were addressed and the international financial architecture changed, sustainable development would remain a rhetorical slogan.

45. Bangladesh was extremely vulnerable to natural disasters. Floods and cyclone storm surges had become more frequent. Global warming and the consequent rise in the sea level would have devastating consequences for the country. Coordinated international action on disaster mitigation and adaptation was imperative, and regional cooperation was effective in many instances.

46. In conclusion, his Government favoured development that did not destroy or undermine the ecological, economic or social foundations on which the country depended. The Commission on Sustainable Development had a crucial role to play in forging

consensus on the actions required to achieve such development.

47. **Mr. Toscano** (Switzerland) said that good-quality water was essential to efforts to combat poverty. The goal set at the Johannesburg Summit of achieving integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans by 2005 must be a priority for all countries, and an ecosystemic approach must be taken. His Government attached particular importance to consistent follow-up to various activities concerning water. It was time to consider a governance structure for water within the United Nations. It would be desirable for the Commission on Sustainable Development to determine the form of such a mechanism that would be acceptable to all parties concerned and allow for follow-up.

48. The work programme on protected areas adopted at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity called for specific action and sufficient resources at the national and international levels. His Government welcomed the decision of that Conference to start negotiations on an international regime to promote access and benefit sharing and continued to work for an effective regime that struck a balance between the interests of countries that provided genetic resources, mainly countries of the South, and countries that used them. It called on Governments that had not yet done so to ratify the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Biological diversity also depended on sectoral, agricultural and commercial policies. The international community must strengthen coherence and coordination between the Convention on Biological Diversity and other multilateral treaties such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Such work was already under way in the forest carbon sequestration projects under the Kyoto Protocol.

49. International cooperation and the involvement of all countries were required to combat the danger posed by climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol were appropriate instruments for strengthening such cooperation. His Government therefore called on all the industrialized countries that had not yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol to do so and welcomed the decision by the Government of the Russian Federation to send the Protocol to Parliament for ratification. Switzerland, for its part, had enacted legislation that envisaged a 10 per cent reduction in the carbon dioxide emissions from 1990 levels by 2010. Developing countries must be more effectively and fairly involved in implementing the Climate Convention, particularly its main goal of reducing greenhouse gases to safe levels, as developing countries would be emitting as much greenhouse gases as industrial countries by 2015. Lastly, his Government would call for a programme of work on adaptation at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

50. His delegation commended the financing of the Convention to Combat Desertification by the Global Environment Facility in 2003. However, progress had already been made on combating land degradation and improving soil and water management by the Governments and rural populations concerned, in partnership with United Nations and other agencies, well before the Convention had come into being. The Government of Switzerland was therefore pleased to support a study under way by the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, which would highlight the innovative efforts of the rural communities affected by desertification.

51. Finally, the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005 was a unique opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of disaster reduction strategies at all levels. His Government would continue to be involved in strengthening local and national capacities. It also recognized the positive effects of an integrated approach to risk reduction and would pursue innovative partnerships towards that end with international and regional financial institutions as well as the private sector.

52. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that, under the Water, Sanitation and Health Programme of the World Health Organization (WHO), Iceland, Australia and Bangladesh were currently developing tools and methods to address community or small town water management supply needs. Iceland had concentrated on the development of water safety plans for small towns and communities, based on the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point approach. Preliminary tests were currently being conducted of four waterworks that served communities with populations of between 144 and 1,500.

53. Although Iceland, Australia and Bangladesh represented three climatic extremes and were situated in very different parts of the world, all three had related goals of increasing the capacity of communities to address water safety and management issues. An

initial meeting funded by his Government would be held in Iceland in cooperation with WHO in January 2005 to review the tools currently being produced by the three countries and make plans for field testing in selected developing countries. The participants would have experience in community water supply management from both developed and developing countries. Several developing countries, including a number of small island States in the Pacific region, had expressed interest in the types of approaches currently being developed by Iceland, Australia and Bangladesh, which WHO believed could be effective in many Member States that wanted to enhance water supply and management issues in small communities. With monitoring, evaluation and follow-up, those systems could gradually provide data for large-scale use in a variety of geographic and social contexts. His delegation hoped that that initiative would be a practical input in the context of the Millennium Development Goals and the forthcoming United Nations Decade on Water for Life (2005-2015).

54. **Ms. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan) said that one of the main challenges facing her Government, which believed that water-related issues should go hand-in-hand with sanitation, was how to achieve a cost-effective utilization of water resources and prevent pollution. The problem was complicated by the fact that 70 per cent of her country's surface water resources, including its drinking water supplies, originated outside its boundaries. Azerbaijan therefore recognized the need for prevention of water basin pollution and reduction of transboundary pollution. It could not be assumed that the common dependency of neighbouring countries on the same water resources could become an engine for cooperation in regions where dialogue was otherwise difficult to achieve. In that regard, only adherence to the norms and principles of international law, specifically the ratification and implementation of the Helsinki Convention of 1992 by the Kura river riparian States could enhance the prospects for dialogue at the intergovernmental level.

55. Noting that developing countries were seriously affected by natural disasters because they lacked adequate technical and technological capacities, she said that her Government was conducting a nationwide risk assessment and risk mapping exercise with a view to mainstreaming disaster risks into national policy and sustainable development strategies. In that regard, Azerbaijan welcomed the forthcoming World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the launch of the World Vulnerability Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which would help to consolidate a framework for cooperation of all parties involved in disaster risk reduction in Azerbaijan. Her delegation also hoped that the UNDP Disaster Risk Index would improve understanding of the relationship between development and disaster risk.

56. While Azerbaijan recognized its own responsibility for the conservation of biodiversity, it could not fulfil that responsibility because 20 per cent of its territory was under Armenian occupation. The international community should enable States whose territories were under foreign occupation to exercise their sovereign right over their biological resources by preventing the illegal exploitation and depletion of such resources and holding the foreign companies involved accountable for such illegal activities.

57. Noting that the Commission on Sustainable Development had a crucial role to play in the follow-up to the Johannesburg Summit, she said that the obstacles impeding implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation in developing countries included a lack of financing, capacity-building problems and indebtedness. Therefore, means of implementation and policy coherence should be cross-cutting issues and the thirteenth session of the Commission should identify action-oriented policy options based on results of the review year and details of each thematic review. Regional perspectives on policy options and inputs from the regional commissions were crucial.

58. Her delegation welcomed the role of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in strengthening inter-agency collaborative arrangements in the key areas of water, sanitation and patterns of consumption and production. It fully recognized the role of the Economic and Social Council and supported the recommendation to utilize the Council's potential contribution to the follow-up and implementation process through its high-level, operational and coordination segments.

59. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN had been promoting a regional approach to the protection of the environment since 1972. Furthermore, following the Rio Earth Summit and the Johannesburg Summit on

Sustainable Development, ASEAN environment ministers had agreed to prioritize cooperation in 10 areas, including global environmental issues, coastal and marine environment, freshwater resources, public awareness and environmental education and urban environmental management and governance. Those 10 priority areas were currently being translated into action, guided by ASEAN Vision 20/20 and the ASEAN Sociocultural Community.

60. A framework on environmentally sustainable cities focusing on clean air, clean water and clean land had recently been adopted and ASEAN was exploring partnerships with several institutions including a strategy for integrated waste management developed together with the UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre. The recent entry into force of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution testified to his organization's resolve to prevent further loss of forests and to enhance the sustainable cities programme on clean air. The adoption of a long-term strategic plan for integrated water resources management complemented and enhanced the initiative to promote clean water in cities. ASEAN environment ministers had recently endorsed the ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks and Reserves. Furthermore, ASEAN had been carrying out its efforts to conserve the region's biological diversity through the ASEAN Biodiversity Centre in collaboration with the European Union.

61. While it was the primary responsibility of individual countries to implement the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, they could not do so without the partnership of developed countries. An enabling international environment was absolutely essential in that regard. The implementation cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development should continue to play a leading role within the framework of the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation. It was important to provide financial assistance, technology transfer and capacity-building to enable developing countries to implement the Johannesburg Plan. The third meeting of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building to be held in Bali in December 2004 should produce a concrete plan outlining a clear focus for developing countries on technology support and capacity-building. Lastly, in a bid to strengthen its role in the promotion of sustainable development in the region, ASEAN had agreed to establish an environment fund and invited partner countries and organizations to cooperate closely with it towards that end.

62. **Mr. Alimov** (Tajikistan), reviewing the achievements of the International Year of Fresh Water, 2003, welcomed the increased awareness worldwide of the interrelationship between freshwater use and sustainable development. The International Year had been marked by major international events that had contributed enormously to the analytical development of various aspects of the water issue. Currently, that issue had become a major global priority for international cooperation, as demonstrated by the Secretary-General's decision to establish an Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation.

63. Tajikistan believed that freshwater problems could be effectively dealt with only through consistent, targeted and long-term joint actions. Accordingly, the President of Tajikistan had declared an International Decade of Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015. In order for that International Decade to be effective, it was essential to develop an implementation programme based on the internationally agreed goals on water taking into consideration the interests of all concerned. Such a rational approach had been developed at the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development that had focused on water, sanitation and human settlements.

64. The recent experience of Tajikistan proved that a rational use of water resources could become a valuable instrument for economic and social development. Therefore, broader international cooperation on water resources could become the driving force behind sustainable development and poverty eradication for many countries.

65. **Ms. Filip** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that, since the Johannesburg Summit, her organization had reformed its decision-making bodies and established three main committees, including a committee on sustainable development, finance and trade issues that was assisting national parliament. Recent resolutions adopted by that committee had recommended actions that Parliaments should take to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, made suggestions on trade and agricultural products and anti-HIV/AIDS medicines, as well as provided Parliaments with practical guidelines to craft

appropriate legislation to meet the needs of their populations.

66. The Union had also contributed to the success of the Parliamentary Forum held within the framework of the June 2004 International Conference for Renewable Energies held in Germany. In view of the next cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development (2005-2007) devoted to energy and related issues, she hoped that the policy platform agreed at the Bonn Parliamentary Forum would help IPU members to follow the issue more closely. The use of renewable sources of energy was also critical to reducing global warming — perhaps the world's greatest environmental challenge — and IPU had been urging Parliaments for years to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. It had sent a unanimous message asking the Russian Parliament to proceed as expeditiously as possible with the ratification of the Protocol.

67. In the key area of trade and financing for development, IPU and the European Parliament had created a Parliamentary Conference on WTO to help to break the impasse in intergovernmental trade negotiations, while also making WTO more transparent and accountable to elected representatives of the people.

68. Furthermore, IPU member Parliaments had adopted a comprehensive resolution on financing for development and would organize a major debate in the spring of 2005 to consider innovative forms of financing and seek political support for their implementation.

69. Support for the strengthening of democratic principles and institutions around the world remained the main thrust of IPU work. The linkages between democracy and sustainable development had been stressed in the final declaration of the Parliamentarians' Forum on the occasion of the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies held in September 2003.

70. Together with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), IPU had begun a needs assessment exercise among Parliaments as a first stage towards a five-year programme of activities aimed at building the capacities of Parliaments to interpret and implement international environmental agreements. That partnership with UNITAR was a very concrete example of what the United Nations and IPU could do to increase the likelihood that international commitments with respect to sustainable development were indeed honoured.

71. *Ms. Anzorge (Poland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

72. **Mr. Subedi** (Nepal) recalled that, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Governments had accepted the fact that the developing countries needed additional financial and technological resources in order fully and effectively to apply its Plan of Implementation. Welcoming the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development in its first cycle, addressing the issues of water, sanitation and human settlements, and its new multi-year work programme, he called on the international community to support the efforts of developing countries to establish and improve their infrastructures so as to provide clean water, adequate sanitation and safe shelter in both rural and urban areas, as well as to reduce the impacts of disasters. The decision-making process should be in place at global, regional and local levels.

73. Climate change was a global phenomenon with serious implications for mankind, and Nepal was in favour of global cooperation under the United Nations Framework Convention in order to address its various effects. His country also attached great importance to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Nepal had also supported the initiative for the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, and shared the hope of the small island developing States that the International Meeting for the 10-year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Mauritius in January 2005, would produce a major outcome in terms of addressing their concerns.

74. The persistence of poverty continued to be an obstacle to achieving the goals of sustainable development. Lack of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building were major challenges and constraints for the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, in meeting internationally agreed goals and targets. Nepal urged the international community, particularly the developed countries and international financial institutions, to fulfil their commitments. Significant attention should be given to the three core issues of poverty reduction, environment conservation and social integration;

bringing them together into sustainable development strategies would be significant not only for the implementation of the commitments made in Johannesburg but also for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

75. **Mr. Ramadan** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), welcoming the fact that the Commission on Sustainable Development had dealt at its twelfth session with the priorities of water, sanitation and human settlements, said that encouraging progress had been made at various levels. However, a large number of developing countries, especially in Africa, had not been able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals concerning access to drinking water and sanitation, because of their own economic difficulties, poverty and lack of financial and technical resources, and because commitments made at international conferences had not been implemented and they had not received the necessary assistance. At its thirteenth session in 2005, the Commission should emphasize the political choices and measures needed to deal with those difficulties and should adopt recommendations that would enable developing countries, especially the least developed countries, to achieve their Millennium Development Goals.

76. Another challenge faced by the developing countries of Africa, especially those near the Sahara, was that of drought and desertification. Such countries required the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as an effective means of consolidating sustainable development and eradicating poverty. They also needed more financial and technical assistance from donor countries and international organizations, especially the Global Environment Facility and UNDP. The proclamation of 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification would consolidate and promote implementation of the Convention and raise international awareness of the problems of drought. Since a large number of developing countries faced human and natural disasters, often as a result of climate change, there was a need to develop an international strategy for disaster prevention and an early warning strategy to deal with disasters. Financial resources were required to consolidate national capacities and to develop an exchange of information between developing countries. There was also a need for cooperation among all Member States in order to achieve the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. All signatories of the Additional Protocol must consolidate their efforts and find practical solutions to the problems arising from climate change.

77. *Mr. Balarezo (Peru) resumed the Chair.*

78. **Mr. Leslie** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member States that were Members of the United Nations, commended the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was the primary intergovernmental body charged with the implementation of and follow-up to the sustainable development commitments related to small island developing States. Greater impetus must be given to fulfilling the commitments which the international community had collectively endorsed over the past decade. In the past year, the CARICOM member States and other members of the Alliance of Small Island States had been engaged in the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action: the areas of action identified in 1994 remained relevant and merited special attention. In the Caribbean region, the issue of capacity-building had been systematically addressed with a regional project for mainstreaming adaptation to climate change, focusing on building capacity to assess vulnerability and risks, to utilize resources effectively to reduce vulnerability and to improve public education and outreach. A Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre had been established to enhance regional institutional capabilities for the coordination of national responses to negative effects of climate change.

79. CARICOM welcomed the successful outcome of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in Milan in December 2003, at which a number of outstanding issues relating to implementation of the Kyoto Protocol had been resolved and a wide range of options explored for limiting greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. CARICOM had also been pleased to note that the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification had held a second successful session in which it had conducted an extensive assessment of further steps to be taken in the implementation of the Convention and had made a number of recommendations on major issues such as resource mobilization, including coordination and partnership agreements.

80. CARICOM had created a Caribbean Regional Water Partnership to foster cooperation in integrated water resource management, and was continuing to strengthen efforts to designate marine and terrestrial protected areas to safeguard its rich diversity. Most member States had national disaster management policies and strategies in place, but the 2004 hurricane season had demonstrated their continuing vulnerability. CARICOM considered that the importance of synergies among the various Rio Conventions could not be overemphasized, and welcomed mechanisms such as the Joint Liaison Group.

81. The ability of CARICOM to make significant advances towards sustainable development had been inhibited by the need for better access to financial resources, appropriate science and technology, and strengthened capacity development. The Community reiterated the call for significant international cooperation and a return to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. The development and creation of a more inclusive and equitable global economic system was critical to eradicating poverty, achieving sustained economic growth and promoting sustainable development. CARICOM, therefore, reiterated the need for a more open, democratic and just multilateral trading regime in order to create an enabling economic environment that achieved greater coherence between the international trading, monetary and financial systems and took account of the development concerns of developing countries.

82. **Mr. Moeini** (Islamic Republic of Iran) welcomed the decision of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eighth special session to launch preparation of the strategic plan on capacity-building and technology support with a view to its finalization at the February 2005 session of the UNEP Governing Council. The plan, which should be country-driven, effective and action-oriented, with clear timetables and targets, should also be provided with sufficient resources for its implementation in order to address countries' priority needs in the environmental field. The strengthening of international environmental governance depended more than ever on the success of that process, and in that context his country encouraged its partners to make a more positive contribution to it. The discussion of universal membership for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum had clearly indicated how important the issue was for some countries and how complex for others. It was his country's strong belief that the issue should be considered by the General Assembly.

83. The twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had conveyed a strong and courageous message to countries as well as to the United Nations regarding further strengthening of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The thirteenth session should further the implementation of the agreed commitments, goals and targets of the Plan of Implementation and avoid the introduction of recommendations or frameworks that affected the integrity of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation. By raising awareness and mobilizing resources, the new Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation should strengthen implementation of the intergovernmental agreements contained in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. However, it must focus on finding practical ways of improving implementation rather than engaging in a policy debate on water and sanitation, which would be the task of the Commission at its thirteenth session.

84. The Islamic Republic of Iran attached great importance to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, which would consider topics closely linked to the sustainable environmental, economic and social livelihoods of people. The Conference should set the stage for addressing the adverse effects of natural disasters through specific action-oriented recommendations aimed at strengthening national, regional and international capacities for disaster reduction. It should give equal consideration to all types of natural disasters and in particular earthquake, flood and drought. It should promote national capacity and regional cooperation, particularly among different stakeholders in the exchange of information and knowledge regarding disaster management. That could be done through the establishment of specialized regional collaborative centres for different types of natural disasters, as well as through the promotion of interregional and international cooperation.

85. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the decisions of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and noted with interest recent developments regarding the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. The number of non-annex I parties that had submitted initial national communications and the number of those which had started preparing their second national communications showed the commitment of developing countries to fulfilling their obligations under the Framework Convention. The Secretary-General's report in document A/59/197 had stated that the decrease in aggregate greenhouse gas

emissions of annex I parties in 2000, to below 1990 levels, had been largely due to the decrease in emissions from countries with economies in transition. Thus, the decrease had not been due to implementation of their commitment by developed countries. The report had added that aggregate emissions of annex I countries were expected to increase in the period 2000-2010. Available information and data pointed to the failure of annex B parties to the Kyoto Protocol to meet the targets of the first commitment period. That was a matter of serious concern, which had the potential to hinder the effective implementation of the Kyoto Protocol immediately after its entry into force. In that connection, the Islamic Republic of Iran urged all annex I and annex B countries to fulfil their reduction commitments, as well as their technological and financial commitments to the developing countries.

86. His delegation expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in pursuing implementation of the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, and supported the actions proposed in the report of the Secretary-General. His country also supported the activities of the Joint Liaison Group on promoting activities in the low forest cover countries, and emphasized the need for the Group to identify specific measures for addressing the special needs and requirements of those countries. It was important to solicit adequate financial resources for the current financial cycle of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as well as solid international commitment for the provision of sufficient resources for its next replenishment.

87. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the outcome of the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and particularly its work on developing a framework to facilitate assessment of progress made towards the achievement of the 2010 targets.

88. **Mr. Doig** (Peru), speaking on behalf of the Andean Community, said that in the past few years Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and his own country had experienced an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters and extreme climatic phenomena, a disproportionate number of which had caused serious social and economic damage. The consequences for the region had been severe and very broad in scope. Climate change might well have been responsible for making the subregion's climate more variable, with successive and prolonged droughts, floods, high winds and El Niño phenomena which had become even more devastating than in the past. Human activity, particularly contamination and damage to the environment caused by unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, was a partial cause of the problem. Such vulnerability had to be tackled by the international community as a whole because of the devastating effects and high social and economic costs entailed. For that reason, the Andean Community reiterated its commitment to continue promoting the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and called for the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. In July 2004, the Heads of State of the countries of the Andean Community had approved the Andean Strategy for Disaster Prevention and Response, which would mean that disaster reduction could be incorporated as a prevention policy and development strategy in the national agendas of the five countries. A regional strategy could then be formulated on the basis of identified national needs. The mechanism had been developed in accordance with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The Andean Community also welcomed the efforts to establish the International Centre for Studies of the El Niño Phenomenon, located in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and called on the international community to continue providing institutional, scientific and technical support so that it could become fully operational.

89. The Andean countries contained 25 per cent of the world's biological diversity, and the Andean Community had initiated a dialogue to concert policies and strategies aimed at promoting the use of biological diversity and its benefits for development on the basis of sustainable criteria. There was an Andean Regional Strategy on Biodiversity, and the Andean States were in the process of developing an action plan to identify and develop common joint projects. There was also an Andean programme for bio-trade, the goal of which was to promote investment and trade in biodiversity products and services. A memorandum of understanding had recently been signed between the Andean Community and the Amazon Treaty Organization, with areas of interest and cooperation that were based on the Andean Regional Strategy on Biodiversity and the Andean plan for following up the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Finally, he drew attention to the fact that the Second Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership, an initiative that had been launched at the Johannesburg Summit, was to be held in Cuzco, Peru, on 28 and 29 October 2004.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.